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Hodgkinson

Narrative of his Connection with the Old American Company

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NARRATIVE

OF HIS

CONNECTION

WITH THE

OLD AMERICA COMPANY,

FROM THE FIFTH SEPTEMBER, 1792,

TO THE THIRTY-FIRST OF MARCH, 1797,

By JOHN HODGKINSON.

NEW-YORK:

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—1797.—

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NARRATIVE, &c.

ON the 29th of March I was prevented from going on with my Character for the Evening, by a Part of the Audience calling for Mrs. *Hallam*, formerly an Actreſs in the Company, but who, for Reaſons which will hereafter appear, was no longer under any Engagements. Mrs. *Hallam*, contrary to the Regulations of the Theatre, and to an expreſs Article ſigned by Mr. *Hallam*, came through the private Door into the Theatre, and, on the Stage, where ſhe was ſupported by Mr. *Hallam*, a Performer and principal Proprietor of the Theatre, who addreſſed the Audience, and obtained Permiſſion for her to read a Paper intended for their hearing; the Purport of which was, a Complaint of having been *driven* unjuſtly from the Stage, after having been ten Years on it, without any *ſufficient* Cauſe; intimating all this had been effected by my Agency. In the Confuſion which followed, I was not allowed to juſtify myſelf. After ſome Time, I ſubmitted, engaging to exculpate myſelf by a Publication in the Papers, or elſewhere.

THE Proceedings of this Evening, in Connection with what had paſſed in the Courſe of the Winter, left no Room to doubt of Concert between ſome of the Spectators and Mr. and Mrs. *Hallam*.

ON the 31ſt, a ſtill larger Party attended the Repreſentation at the Theatre, with an apparent Determination to prejudge and condem me. Marks of this Determination were ſo renew'd and repeated, that I thought it no longer poſſible for me to continue on the Stage. It remains for me to fulfil my Engagement with the Public: For this Purpoſe I ſhall exhibit a brief Narrative of my whole Connection with the American Theatres. The Reſult

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Reſult will ſhew, that ſo far from having conducted unjuſtly towards Mrs. *Hallam*, and the Public, in Regard to her, that ſhe has been the Source of the principal Troubles which have ariſen: that my Conduct in this Reſpect, at leaſt, has been becoming my Situation, and that it is I, and not ſhe or Mr. *Hallam*, who have been injured on the preſent Occaſion.

I was engaged from one of the firſt Theatres in England, by the late Mr. *John Henry*, as a principal Performer for the New-York and Philadelphia Theatres, and arrived in this Country September 5th, 1792. An Idea inſtilled into me, that every Article of Life was full as cheap again here as there, made me accept a more moderate Salary than I ſhould have done, had I been rightly informed. I was to remain for two Years and ſix Months, at three Guineas and a Half weekly; to be ſecured to me for ten Months in the Year. This Contract I fulfilled on my Part, though violated in ſeveral Inſtances by the Managers, *Hallam* and *Henry*, and eleven Weeks of Salary due at this Hour to me and my Family from them, on my original Agreements.

I found the Theatre under Regulations widely different from my Expectations; the Managers and their Families did not know each other out of the Profeſſion; and when they met in it, their whole Study ſeemed to be the ſowing Diſſentions and creating different Intereſts —a Syſtem of Government avowed and recommended by Mr. *Hallam*. The Conſequence of this was *Negligence*, *Party*, and *Strife*. I ſoon was given to underſtand that this had *always* been the Caſe. Mr. *Henry*'s Conduct and Behaviour ſeemed ſo different from the Gentleman, I had converſed with in England, that I could not avoid forming Prejudices againſt him, and in favour of *Hallam*. This Mr. *Henry* ſaw, and took an Opportunity of telling me I misjudg'd him; and that Mr. *Hallam*, though appearing perfectly mild and candid, ſecretly gave him every Diſquiet and Miſery, and had utterly broke his Temper. The Want of Unanimity

mity at last extended to a total Subversion of all Order: Pieces were given out, and no Manager attended to point a single Direction. The Orchestra was composed of about six Musicians, some of whom were incapable of their Business; and had I not been induced by Considerations for my own Reputation as an Actor, to take Care that the Stage Department was not totally destroyed where I was concern'd, this neglect would have been more apparent than it was! Notwithstanding my Exertions, the Theatre was nearly deserted. Mr. *Henry* said he could not exist under such Torment longer, and offered to sell his Share of the Property. I urged Mr. *Hallam* to negotiate for it, and offered to become a Purchaser afterward from him, and that I would undertake the conducting of the Theatre. The Terms of Sale were left for Mr. *Hallam* to arrange with a Friend of Mr. *Henry*'s; and at this Period I saw a Letter of his, requesting a speedy End to the Business; for that, sooner than be concerned any longer where Mrs. *Hallam* was, he would transport himself to Botany Bay. I deemed this the Effect of violent Anger or Prejudice, and suffered it to make no Impression on my Mind at the Time.

In the Month of May, 1794, Mr. *Henry* sold to Mr. *Hallam* all his Share of the theatrical Property within the United States of America, for £4000, payable by four annual Instalments of £ 1000 each.

In the same Month, I purchased from *Lewis Hallam* one Half the Property of the Old American Company within the United States, for £ 4000, payable by four annual Instalments of £ 1000 each.

During the Summer, I endeavoured to make such Additions to the Company as were necessary; and on the 22d of September commenced my unfortunate Career as a Manager and Proprietor in the City of Philadelphia. On the 20th October, Mrs. *Hallam* performed Lady Rackett, in too degraded a State to be seen; and on observing that some of the Ladies of the Theatre noticed her Situation, gave them ill Language, and finished with this Expression —"Wretches teat I support by my Labours!"

On the 27th of October, in a violent Fit of Intemperance, Mrs. *Hallam* was quarreling with Mr. *Aſhton*, a Member of the Company; and as the Performance of "Wild Oats," was then proceeding, I mildly interfered, and begged her for the Preſent to treat whatever the Matter was as not worth her Notice. She immediately commenced a ſtrain of Invective and Abuſe, ſuch as I had never heard, or ever did expect to hear, from the Mouth of a Female: *Raſcal! Scoundrel! Swindler* of her Huſband's Property! and other Epithets equally unjuſt, for two Hours was I baited with; and during the Performance of the After-piece, "Don Juan," every Mock and Ridicule that could be was caſt on my Endeavours to conduct ſo troubleſome a Pantomime to its Cloſe. Some of the Performers then with us, ſtill remain.

On the Morning of the 28th, I wrote Mr. *Hallam* a Letter to the following Effect: "That having taken twelve Hours to pauſe on the unmerited Treatment I had received, I muſt beg to decline any further official Capacity in the Old American Company: obſerving, that the Property had been ſo little a Time in my Hands; Mr. *Hallam* could receive no Inconvenience by accepting it back on the ſame Terms I had purchaſed; that I had no Wiſh to diſtreſs him by an immediate Removal, but would ſtay with him upon the Fulfilment of my original Engagements to the Expiration of them, or the Concluſion of the following York Seaſon." To this Letter Mr. *Hallam* wrote the following:

"Dear Sir,

"I cannot anſwer you—I have not cloſed my Eyes "from the Circumſtance of laſt Night—Will you meet "me at *Cellers'* Tavern, and we will dine alone?"

I went as uſual, to the Theatre, to conduct the Rehearſal, and in ſome little Time after my Arrival there received a Meſſage from Mrs. *Hallam*—that ſhe was at my houſe, and wiſhed to ſee me. I returned for anſwer,

I

I was at the Theatre, and could not attend Mrs. *Hallam*. She ſent my Servant back to ſay ſhe muſt ſee me, and that if I would not wait on her then, ſhe would remain till I ſhould come Home. I determined on ſeeing her: She began with Tears, a very ſtrong Apology for her Conduct, and ſaid ſhe was utterly ruined with Mr. *Hallam* if I perſiſted in reſigning the Property. I aſked her if ſhe remembered the Events of the preceding Evening? She replied, ſhe had no Recollection of them, and that my Letter to her Huſband was a Thunderbolt to her. I repeated the Epithets ſhe had made uſe of, and ſhe *ſeemed* very much ſhock'd. She begged my forgetfulneſs of the paſt, ſolemnly aſſerting ſhe ſhould look upon herſelf as the vereſt Wretch exiſting, ſhould ſhe ever, by ſimilar Imprudence, riſk a future Miſunderſtanding. I forgave her ſincerely, and we parted. I dined the ſame Day at a Tavern, with Mr. *Hallam*, according to his Appointment, who ſeemed, and I believe was moſt ſenſibly affected, and I recollect made uſe of the following Expreſſion: "I know that Girl ſo well, I'm ſure ſhe never will for-"give herſelf, or drink any Thing but Water as long as "ſhe lives." I told Mr. *Hallam*, it was a Failing that, if not put an effectual Stop to, would deſtroy every Poſſibility of my Continuance in the Company, or Management. I proceeded, as uſual, in my Capacity of Acting-Manager, and on the 14th of November ſhe was again intemperate and abuſive when performing Lady Fancourt, in the Comedy of "Love's Frailties." My Wife alſo now began to feel the Effects of her Pride, and was frequently treated with every Contempt. I cloſed that Theatre on the 4th of December, after ten Weeks of woeful managerial Experience.

I commenced in New-York, December 15th, and on the 20th Mrs. *Hallam* was again in a State which incapacitated her for performing Miſs Walſingham, in the "School for Wives," in a ſuitable Manner. On the 29th ſhe was conſiderably worſe in the Character of Marianne, in the "Dramatiſt." On the 5th of January,

1795,

1795, we performed "Percy," and in the Fight with Douglas, I, by Accident, cut Mr. *Hallam*'s Hand: Mrs. *Hallam* came behind the Scenes in a violent Rage, and on being asked what had disturbed her, replied, "Why! that damn'd Butcher has cut Mr. *Hallam!*" On the 6th of January, I wrote Mr. *Hallam* the following Letter:

"Sir,

"ON so disagreeable a Business, as it is my Duty to "come to a perfect Explanation with you, I was in hope "I might gain an Opportunity of personal Remon- "strance: But no—you seem to shun me! I had "adopted a certainty that after the very unmerited and "illiberal Language heaped on my by Mrs. *Hallam*, in "Philadelphia, and her solemn Oath, I never should "hear a Repetition, it would have ceased. Why, Sir, am "I so frequently the Cause of her present Vengeance? "And why do you not take Measures to prevent such "Conduct? Is it because every Moment of my Life is "dedicated to promoting our mutual Interest? Is it be- "cause I am incessantly studying to make the Theatre "respectable, and increase your Welfare and Prosperity? "Why, Sir, last Night, for an Accident of trivial Na- "ture, had I the very delicate Term of *Butcher* applied "to me? And why, a few Evenings back again, that "of *Swindler* and *Rascal?*. Good God, Sir, if either "have a Claim on the other for Gratitude, I think it is "due from you, and that your Property by this Time, "had I not stepped in and prop'd it, would have fallen "to the Ground. It becomes no Plea to assert that "*Reason* has no Share in these Declarations: They "are private Sentiments, which Reason smoothers, and "that banish'd, the Soul is thrown open undisguised. "I feel your Situation, Mr. *Hallam*: I am cut to the "Heart to see it, but I cannot, will not, remain indif- "ferent to my own. My Wife, Sir, is not permitted "nor does she endeavour or wish to know more of Bu-

"siness

" fineſs than I caſually communicate; and as I cannot " compliment Mrs. *Hallam* with a better Head than my " own, I dont think ſhe can fairly judge my Actions, " and I am certain you *ought* not to permit her; at any " Rate I *will* not; and I think it but honeſt to inform " you, the next Time I hear *her* make Uſe of my " Name undeſervedly, I will immediately throw up the " Buſineſs, and call the Public as an Umpire between " us. Let Mrs. *Hallam* vent illiberal Language on her " Dependants, if ſhe muſt uſe it; I am *none:* And as to " the Property which ſhe is weak enough to imagine ſo " infallible, I would rather give it up than have another " Hour's concern where ſhe is or will be a Meddler.— " Sir, we are a City Talk; and it would certainly be " better to endeavour that Mrs. *Hallam* ſhould be kept " at Home, than ſuffered to expoſe us and herſelf, when " ſo unfit to be ſeen. I know, Sir, I am ſpeaking in " plain Terms; I think it my Duty to do ſo. Delica- " cy, when we throw apart ourſelves, we cannot expect " others to preſerve for us: * * * * * * * * " * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * " * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

" Once more, Sir, be aſſured, my Friendſhip and good " Wiſhes are undiminiſhed; ſo much ſo, that I con- " ceive it an indiſpenſable Duty to uſe no Reſerve; but, " pointing out the Obſtacles that deſtroy our Harmony, " give an Opportunity of removing them, or breaking " the Whole at once.

" I am, Sir, *&c. &c.*

" JOHN HODGKINSON."

New-York,
Jan. 6th, 1795.

☞ There is an Omiſſion in the Letter, where the Stars are. The Part left out, related entirely to his Son; and as he is no Way implicated in this Controverſy, it would not be proper to mention it.

This Letter I received no Anſwer to, but was informed Mr. *Hallam* ſeemed much concerned on peruſing it. On the 10th of January, Mrs. *Hallam* (again in a State of partial Intoxication) performed Lady Euſton, in "I'll tell you What." On the 28th equally ſo in the Marchioneſs Merida, "Child of Nature." On the 25th February, I brought forward the Comedy of the "*Jew*," for the firſt Time in this Theatre; and in the elegant chaſte Character of Eliza Ratcliffe, the Audience witneſſed an Exhibition too diſguſtful to remember, and too diſgraceful to the Stage to be dwelt upon. The general Cry ſeemed to be—"She muſt inſult us no more!" I informed Mr. *Hallam* of this, in Company with a Gentleman who has been long his Friend, and both our Opinions were, that if Mrs. *Hallam* riſked another Appearance, the People would ſhew their Reſentment. Mr. *Hallam* determined on withdrawing her, and begged from me the diſagreeable Office of communicating to her the Reſolution. I undertook this, and a Scene ſo diſtreſſing, ſo harraſſing to the Feelings, I ſcarce ever did witneſs, and hope never may again. She was from before the Public one Month, and the Theatre progreſſed with every poſſible Harmony and Credit. During this Time, a Report was induſtriouſly circulated that Laudanum was the Cauſe of Mrs. *Hallam*'s frequent Incapability. The Public Voice turned, and there was a Wiſh to ſee her again. Convinced, *whatever was the Cauſe*, it would be her Study in future to avoid that *particular* Thing, which brought her Weakneſs before the Public Eye, I took Advantage of this Prepoſſeſſion, and told Mr. *Hallam* I was certain, if ſhe appeared, ſhe would be greatly received. I did this becauſe I felt Conviction her late Mortification muſt have been a ſtrong Monitor, and poſſibly a Reformation muſt enſue, both in Conduct behind the Scenes and on the Stage. On the 25th of March ſhe reaſſumed her Profeſſion in Lady Teazle. The ſecond Character ſhe repreſented was Cordelia, March 30th, in which ſhe was not perfectly herſelf. On the

the 10th of April she performed Louisa, in the "World in a Village," and several People in Disgust left the Theatre. On the 11th of May she performed Miss Neville, in "Know your own Mind," a Comedy got up by me, about a Fortnight before, for Mrs. *Hodgkinson*'s Benefit. My Wife dressed in the same Room, and a little Time after Mrs. *Hallam*'s Arrival, she commenced her abuse of me, and of the Character she was going to represent; and, looking in my Wife's Face, cried, "Damn the Play; damn the Person who got it up, and damn the Person for whom it *was* got up." The next Day I requested Mrs. *Hodgkinson* to quit that Room. I then wrote to Mr. *Hallam* the following Letter:

"Sir,

"I have delayed, till Mrs. *Hallam*'s Benefit was past, "communicating my Determination on our future Con- "nection. After the most minute Investigation on the "Possibility of Friendship or Harmony existing, I find "none. There are Obstacles insurmountable. I have "combated them in Hope; I have borne them from "sincere Attachment. When I became a Partner in "this Theatre, it was not with the Hope of bettering "my Situation: It was to make it permanent; it was "to support, as far as I could, *you*; because I conceived "you injured and oppressed by your former Connection. "My Opinion now is, that whatever might have been "Mr. *Henry*'s other Failings, he saw you your own "Enemy, and was conviuced an unworthy Influence "made you other People's. I will not dwell on what, "with me, is fix'd as Fate: We must separate. I am "anxious to regain that Peace which as a private Indivi- "dual no Man possessed in a higher Degree. I wish to "resign the Management. If you will not take the "Property on the Valuation of three unprejudiced Per- "sons, I will certainly advertise my Share to the highest "Bidder. Mr. *G*— is in full Possession of my Senti-

"ments.

" ments. I would wiſh you to adviſe with him on the " beſt and moſt peaceable Mode of tranſacting this Buſi- " neſs, and of acquainting our Subſcribers to the new " Theatre.

" I am, Sir, *&c. &c.*

" JOHN HODGKINSON."

On Monday, May 18th, the Comedy of "Which is the Man?" was performed; and the Hair-Dreſſer who attended Mrs. *Hallam* came to my Room to ſay that it was impoſſible for her to go on the Stage that Night, for ſhe was ſo ſenſeleſs ſhe could not ſit in her Chair! It was a Benefit, and therefore the Audience could not well be diſmiſſed. When the Hour of commencing arrived, I was requeſted, three ſeveral Times, to delay the Performance, while ſhe had Vinegar and ſtrong Green Tea given, to reſtore her as much as poſſible. When ſhe did come forward, let thoſe who witneſſed the Spectacle declare the Shame of it.

I had ſoon after a Meeting with Mr. *Hallam*, at the Houſe of one of the moſt reſpectable Characters in this City; and two other Gentlemen, as mutual Friends, attended to give their Advice. I ſtated my Grievances plainly before them, and they uniformly agreed it was impoſſible for me to remain any longer in the Theatre if Mrs. *Hallam* did; and one of them obſerved,—" Mr. " *Hallam*, I have heretofore been anxious to ſuppreſs " and do away Mrs. *Hallam*'s Misfortune, as a Calum- " ny; but, Sir, I was preſent at the Repreſentation of " *Which is the Man?* and when I ſaw her come on the " Stage, I immediately left the Houſe; and had any " one plunged a Sword through my Heart, it could not " have given me a keener Pang than I felt at that Mo- " ment." Mr. *Hallam* ſaid he had no Reply to make; he could not deny any Thing I had aſſerted, and that he knew my Situation to be dreadful! I offered him, once more,

more, the Property on the ſame Terms that I had purchaſed it. This he declined, and promiſed, before the Gentlemen who had intereſted themſelves, to withdraw Mrs. *Hallam* from the Stage totally at the Concluſion of the Seaſon; commiſſioning me, at the ſame Time, to procure an Actreſs in her Place from England. I wrote, by the earlieſt Veſſel, for Mrs. *Johnſon*, and ſhe arrived here on the firſt of October following. The Calamity that afflicted this City in the Autumn of 1795 compelled us to make a Treaty for the Boſton Theatre; and I was not a little ſurpriſed, while in Hartford, to hear that Mrs. *Hallam* had returned to the Stage, and was performing at Providence, with Mr. *Hallam*. Some few Days after our arrival in Boſton, Mr. *Hallam* waited on me, to ſay, that he ſhould make his firſt Eſſay before that Audience in Lord Ogleby, and that Mrs. *Hallam muſt* perform the Character of Miſs Sterling! I made no Reply; I was too much aſtoniſhed! I parted with him to reflect on what had paſſed. I made Enquiries of the Performers reſpecting Mrs. *Hallam*'s Conduct at Providence. They were all agreed it had, if poſſible, been worſe than ever. I felt ſhock'd at Mr. *Hallam*'s Duplicity: a manifeſt Violation of his Word, without even an Attempt at Apology; without any Reaſon but "it muſt be ſo!" Entire Strangers, as we were, a Miſunderſtanding, immediately on our Appearance before the Public, would have been Ruin. I ſubmitted in Silence. In the mean Time I ſtood highly implicated to Mrs. *Johnſon*. who had come three thouſand Miles to ſupply a Line of Characters Mr. *Hallam*'s Inſincerity would deprive her of. Mrs. *Johnſon*, however, with the greateſt Generoſity, in Part relieved me, by ſaying that Mrs. *Hallam* might retain all the Characters ſhe *had* performed: but that, in the Arrangement of new Pieces, ſhe ſhould expect her Engagement fulfilled, by being given the elegant Characters in Comedy. This I not only promiſed, but ſtood pledged to. My Situation as Manager now became more irkſome than ever. Mr. *Hallam* quarrelled with me becauſe he

he did not perform many of the young, First Rate Characters, which he said he had supplied since his first Arrival in America, and that he had not resigned them, nor ever would. Mrs. *Hallam* poured on me every odious Epithet that Intemperance could suggest. An Opportunity offered of releasing myself from this Misery, by an Offer of Connection with the Boston Theatre; but, after some Reflection, my Respect for the Patronage I had experienced from the Citizens of New-York determined me on not accepting it. Mr. *Hallam* was taken ill, and I felt some Alarm, that as yet he had never conveyed my Share of the Property to me, though I had frequently solicited to have it done, and had paid a Part of the Purchase Money. He recovered, and I again applied. He begged it might be postponed till our Arrival in New-York. I agreed reluctantly. When we *did* arrive in New-York, I repeated my Request. I was not successful, till, finally, I sent Mr. *Hallam* Word I would not enter the Theatre till the Deeds were executed. I got legal Possession last March, 22 Months after the Purchase had been made. I think it but Justice to declare, that I was *informed* this Conduct was not Mr. *Hallam*'s Will, but that Mrs. *Hallam* could not be prevailed on to sign. I had frequently conversed with Mr. *Dunlap*, respecting my Situation, and the Torture I laboured under; and as I knew him to be attached to the Theatre, in one of our Conversations, I offered to sell him Half my Share, if he would undertake the Acting Management; for that I had more Labour than the Mind or Body could possibly sustain. I had applied to Mr. *Hallam*, to know what he meant to allow me for my extraordinary Fatigue, and he had peremptorily refused any Compensation; which I thought hard, because, on the first Commencement of Theatrical Business after our Partnership, we had paid a Gentleman *One Hundred Pounds* for acting as Treasurer and Book-keeper only ten Weeks. And here I hope it will not be deemed an unnecessary Digression, if I mention what my Situation exactly

exactly was. I had to caſt and arrange the Buſineſs of every Play brought forward. I had the various Tempers, Rivalſhips, and Ambitions of thirty or forty People to encounter and pleaſe. I kept all the Accounts; I made all Diſburſements, and was made, in all Money Tranſactions, ſolely reſponſible. My profeſſional Labours were extreme, and I never finiſhed them for the Evening that I did not attend to take the State of each Night's Receipts. Nay, inſtead of enjoying my comfortable Hour of ſocial Intercourſe with my Family, on my Arrival Home, I had a Check Account to take, and to make the regular Entries in my Books. I wrote and corrected every Play-Bill for the Printer. I planned and copied every Scene-Plot for the Carpenter. I attended every Rehearſal, to give Directions. I went through a varied and extenſive Line of Characters on the Stage. I found principally my own Wardrobe for them; and my Salary, for all this, was twenty Dollars per Week, paid only when we performed! Mr. *Hallam* received the ſame, and had no Share in the Fatigue. His Anſwer to me, on Application to know what he would allow me, was, that "he would quit the Theatre the Moment any Man received a Shilling more than him." An idea exceedingly unjuſt; for at the Time of his Purchaſe from *John Henry*, the Shares were, Mr. *Henry* Four and a Half, Mr. *Hallam* Three and a Half; and when Mr. *Hallam* agreed with me, he reſerved the Difference: for the whole Property being equally divided between us, Mr. *Hallam* gained a Sixteenth; as he paid Mr. *Henry* no more for Four and a Half Shares, than I did him (Mr. *Hallam)* for Four Shares.

To return to my Narrative: Mr. *Dunlap* ſeemed inclined to treat with me, and finally was introduced, as Acting Manager, into the Theatre, with the Concurrence of Mr. *Hallam*, and to receive my Aſſiſtance. I flattered myſelf I was now ſome little Diſtance removed from my Diſquiets; but I was diſappointed. Mr. *Dunlap*'s

Inexperience

Inexperience compell'd me ſtill to be the Director in the Stage Department, according to Agreement, and I never gave an Order in Mrs. *Hallam*'s hearing that ſhe did not pointedly ridicule and inſult me. My Wife never paſs'd her, that ſhe was not treated with every Mark of Contempt; and thoſe who may lack Information on this Part, or labor under a different Impreſſion, I here inform, that ſhe never made one Word of Reply. I now acquainted Mr. *Dunlap*, it was impoſſible for me to ſtay and perform my Agreements with him; and a very, very irkſome and diſagreeable Correſpondence took Place, between us in Conſequence: I offer'd to ſell him the remaining Share I held, or to put it into his Hands as a Truſt and Security, that he ſhould not be a Loſer by my Abſence: He accepted the latter, and I wrote to the Philadelphia Managers my Reſolution, and of my Wiſh to gain a Situation in their Theatre. They, I preſume, thought my Services of ſome Value for both arriv'd Poſt here, and convers'd perſonally with me on the Buſineſs. I aſked my Terms, and to their Honor let me thus publicly declare, I never did experience in any Negociation more Candor and Liberality; and had I left New-York, their Acquieſcence in my Demands muſt have prov'd to me and my Family infinitely more valuable than any Thing I ever did, or probably may hereafter attain. About this Time Mr. *Dunlap* waited on me, to ſay, that if I could not remain in the Company, and perform my firſt Contracts with him, he muſt relinquiſh his Purchaſe, tho' ſubjected to very great Loſs and Inconvenience thereby: He alſo informed me, he had *written Mr.* Hallam, *that Mrs.* Hallam's *Continuance in the Theatre was an inſuperable Objection to his making any Arrangement with him.* I replied, I *could* not—I *would* not ſtay; and that I preferr'd retiring peaceably, to waging open Controverſy with Mr. *Hallam*; who, in my Opinion, from his long Services, had an unqueſtionable prior Right to his Situation:—that I felt the Injuries of Mr. *Hallam* and his Family forcibly; but that I was

better

better able to provide for, and bear the Evils of Separation, than he was, and I would not retaliate. I relinquish'd the Sale I had made to Mr. *Dunlap*, and he quitted the Business. On the 17th of June last, I wrote Mr. *Hallam* the following Letter:

" Sir,

" THE Season approaching to a Conclusion, it is " necessary that the State in which our Property will be " involv'd by a Separation, should be accurately deter- " min'd and finally put to Agreement. Our Continu- " ance of Partnership is impossible—and therefore it " behoves both of us to promptly act as mutual Justice " may demand:—Repeated Insult and Injury have " steel'd me against further Connection; and I have " only left to make such Arrangements as will secure to " me a Prevention of total Loss, in what I have taken so " much Pains to uphold and increase. You are not " ignorant that the Theatres, belonging to us, cannot be " justly employed by either without the Consent of his " equal. It is not my Wish that the Property should " go to ruin: I Wish it to be prosperous: I have brought " it to that Permanency and Respectability that Miscon- " duct alone can make it otherwise. Your Resources, " by the Return of Capt. *Adamson*, will be encreased: " [here follow'd the Names of some Performers ex- " pected over]—These, with what you will have left, " and in your Power to retain, will form a good Com- " pany;—and the following are Terms on which I will " leave you in peaceable Possession of the Whole, or on " which I will take the Management myself; each per- " mitting the other to make use of his Talents in any " future Way or Situation he may chuse. I will *give* " *you* Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars, for the " Use of your Share and Property, till the First of next " May; I taking all Profits that may accrue up to that " Time, &c.—This Agreement reservable only at the " Option of the Parties.

" I *will take* Two Thouſand Five Hundred Dollars,
" for the Uſe of my Share and Property, up to the Day
" of the Date above-mentioned; leaving you to take all
" Profits, &c. as before ſtated.

" You have now your Choice, to adopt or reject; one
" of which I expect will be determin'd on immediately.

" I am, Sir, *&c. &c.*

" JOHN HODGKINSON."

New-York,
June 17, 1796.

Mr. *Philip Ten Eyck*, was kind enough to bear this Letter; and ſome Time after I met him in Broadway, when I was in Company with an Agent, who had arriv'd from Philadelphia to complete my Engagements for that City: I enquir'd Mr. *Hallam*'s Determination, and was told he wiſhed ſome Days for Conſideration. I inform'd Mr. *Ten Eyck*, that my peculiar Situation requir'd an Anſwer on the following Morning; and that I could not wait longer than that Period. I urg'd Mr. *Ten Eyck* to return to Mr. *Hallam*, and he did ſo: Mr. *Hallam* then promiſed a definitive Anſwer by Mr. *Ten Eyck* the next Day. At the appointed Hour, Mr. *Ten Eyck* waited on me, and found at my Houſe Mr. *Dunlap*, and the Agent from Philadelphia. Mr. *Ten Eyck* obſerved, that Mr. *Hallam* had commiſſioned him to ſay, that " he knew the Cauſe
" of our Differences, but they ſhould ceaſe; for he
" would withdraw Mrs. *Hallam* from the Stage, which
" he preſumed would reconcile the Whole." I anſwered Mr. *Ten Eyck*, that it would not; that Mrs. *Hallam*'s being withdrawn was no Stipulation of mine; for as Mr. *Hallam*, had once before openly broke his Word with me on that Score, I had thought it needleſs to mention as a Difficulty, what if promis'd to be remov'd, would not be long maintained: That Mr. *Dunlap*, I believed, had quitted the Theatre, upon finding it impoſſible

poſſible to conduct it with Propriety, if Mrs. *Hallam* continued; and had written Mr. *Hallam* a Letter to that Effect: That Mr. *Hallam*'s laſt Difficulty with me was, his having laid Claim to many of the moſt principal and youthful Characters in the Drama, which I thought he had reſigned long ago, ſuch as Hamlet, Ranger, Zanga, Oreſtes, Benedick, Don John, *&c. &c.* and his informing Mr. *Dunlap* that I had injured him, by not giving him out for them; but that now he expected them to be brought forward; and that all that I wanted from Mr. *Hallam* now, was an Anſwer reſpecting my Propoſal of our Property. Mr. *Ten Eyck* obſerved, he was no Way privileged to ſpeak on that, as he had ſuppoſed Mrs. *Hallam* the great Objection. I replied, ſhe was ſo; but remarked again, I had conceived no Uſe in mentioning an Impoſſibility. Mr. *Ten Eyck* requeſted Mr. *Dunlap* to accompany him to Mr. *Hallam:* They went together, and, ſome Time after, Mr. *Dunlap* returned, with Information, that Mr. *Hallam* was not only willing to take Mrs. *Hallam* from the Stage, but to leave the caſting of all Pieces to his *(Dunlap*'s*)* Judgment; and that he was willing to enter *into Contracts*, with *any Penalty*, for the Performance of what ſhould be agreed on, as the beſt Mode to ſecure our future Peace. I obſerved, that, wearied by my repeated Diſappointments, I wiſhed no further Connection with Mr. *Hallam*; and that I conceived I had proceeded too far in my Philadelphia Engagement to honourably recede. Mr. *Dunlap* differed with me in this, and remarked, that he had quitted a Buſineſs, in Part, to purchaſe my Property; and that he muſt inevitably experience great Loſs by my Departure: That while he ſaw no Proſpect of my Grievances being redreſſed, he was content to ſubmit; but, now that there was a Certainty of their being remedied, he muſt in Duty call on me to fulfil my Engagements Reſthim, or that he ſhould be compelled to ſeek for my itution in ſome other Way. Finally, I broke off the Philadelphia Negociation, and concluded to remain

once

once more. Contracts were ordered to be drawn up; and I inquired of Mr. *Dunlap*, if Mrs. *Hallam*'s Name was to be inserted? He replied, it would be more delicate to omit her Name, as they could be made equally forcible, without mentioning *her*. I applauded the Idea. The following are the Articles, which Mr. *Hallam* had three Days in his Poſſeſſion, previous to ſigning; and they were made to extend to *Two Years, at his own Requeſt*.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT
Between LEWIS HALLAM, JOHN HODGKINSON, *and* WILLIAM DUNLAP.

WE, the SUBSCRIBERS, do hereby Covenant and Agree, to exert ourſelves in the ſeveral Ways hereafter mentioned, for the mutual Benefit and Profit of each other, and of that Property known under the Denomination of *Property of the Old American Company*; of which the One Half belongs to *Lewis Hallam*, One Fourth to *John Hodgkinſon*, and One Fourth to *William Dunlap*.

THAT *William Dunlap* ſhall, as Acting Manager of the Company, determine, weekly, the Buſineſs of the coming Week; that is, what Plays ſhall be performed; ſubject to no other Controul than the joint Diſapprobation of the other Proprietors. That he ſhall *get up* what new Pieces he ſhall think beſt, and in the Manner he ſhall deem proper, ſubject only to the ſame Controul; and *caſt* them in Conformity to his Judgment, and the Articles of the ſeveral Performers.

THAT *Lewis Hallam* ſhall exert himſelf as a Performer in all thoſe Characters which he has performed, on Stock Nights, ſince the Commencement of the Firm of *Hallam* and *Hodgkinſon*, if called upon ſo to do by the Acting Manager, either by Notification that the Plays containing ſuch Characters will be performed, or otherwiſe: That

That these Characters are considered as his Property; but he shall not resign any one or more of them, without the Concurrence of the Acting Manager; and then only into his Hands, to be at his sole Disposal.

That *John Hodgkinson* shall exert himself as a Performer in all those Characters which he has performed, on Stock Nights, since the Commencement of the Firm of *Hallam* and *Hodgkinson*, if called upon so to do by the Acting Manager; either by Notification that the Plays containing such Characters will be performed, or otherwise: That these Characters are considered as his Property; but he shall not resign any one or more of them, without the Concurrence of the Acting Manager; and then only into his Hands, to be at his sole Disposal.

That, in all Engagements made with any Performers, the Acting Manager, and one of the other Proprietors, shall have Power to bind the three; and no Contract or Engagement shall be made with any Person whatever, without such Concurrence of the Acting Manager, and one of the other Proprietors.

That no other Division of the Profits of the Copartnership shall take Place, under any Appellation whatever, than such Division, or in such Proportion as now exists; and no Alteration whatever shall take Place, without the Concurrence of all the Proprietors.

That, to prevent Disorder and Confusion behind the Scenes, no Person shall be admitted, except the Performers, under any Pretence whatever, without a written Permission from the Acting Manager; Servants, &c. having Tickets for the Season.

That, in all Regulations for the Welfare of the Theatre, made by the Acting Manager, with the Concurrence of the other Proprietors, or such one of them as shall be present, they shall consider themselves on an Equality with the other Performers, except as more bound to a scrupulous Observance of them by the superior influence of their Example.

That

THAT the following Plays, *The Revenge, Diſtreſs'd Mother, Suſpicious Huſband, Hamlet, Much Ado About Nothing*, and ſuch other of the old Drama as have not been performed during the Firm of *Hallam* and *Hodgkinſon*, ſhall be liable to the *Caſt* of the Acting Manager; Mr. *Hallam* or Mr. *Hodgkinſon* having no other Controul over ſuch Caſt than the Refuſal to play in the Piece, if the Character allotted to either of them is ſuch as he ſhall object to.

THAT, in Addition to the Buſineſs of Acting Manager, *William Dunlap* ſhall act as Treaſurer and Book-keeper to the Company.

THAT *John Hodgkinſon* ſhall aſſiſt the Acting Manager by his Advice and perſonal Aid; and, in Caſe of *William Dunlap*'s Sickneſs, or Abſence from other unavoidable Cauſes, or for Purpoſes agreed upon among the Proprietors, or a Majority of them, *John Hodgkinſon* ſhall be conſidered as Acting Manager, and execute the Duties of the Office in the Place of *William Dunlap*; receiving from ſaid *Dunlap* (in Caſe ſuch Abſence ſhall be for one or more Weeks) that Salary which he receives as Acting Manager.

THAT, in Caſe of any Default on the Part of either or any of the Subſcribers. within the Term of two Years, from the firſt Day of May, 1796, they do ſeverally bind themſelves in the Penalty of Four Thouſand Pounds, lawful Money of the State of New-York, to be forfeited by ſuch Breach of this Agreement.

THAT, in Caſe any of the Subſcribers ſhould determine on ſelling the Whole, or any Part, of their Diviſion of the above-mentioned Property, within the above-named Time, the Party ſo wiſhing to ſell, ſhall give the Offer, or Refuſal, to the other Party or Parties, at a Price to be agreed on by them, or to be determined by three indifferent Perſons, choſen by the reſpective Parties.

LEWIS HALLAM. (L.S.)
Hugh Caine. JOHN HODGKINSON. (L.S.)
John Gamage. WILLIAM DUNLAP. (L.S.)

In the Courſe of the preſent Winter, Mr. *Hallam* has appeared much diſſatisfied. It was many Times rumoured that he intended to force his Wife on the Stage: But about the 9th or 10th of February, Mr. *Dunlap* informed me, that Mr. *Hallam* had called on him, to let him know that Mrs. *Hallam* ought to be engaged: And on Mr. *Dunlap*'s replying, that he thought "that Matter had been ſettled in June laſt," had only anſwered by charging me with ſending him in an Account of Money due to me; and by aſſerting the Injuries done to his Wife; concluding with ſaying, that—*he had prevented Diſturbances in the Theatre; but he would do ſo no longer.*

About the 14th of February, Mr. *Dunlap* informed me that he had waited on Mr. *Hallam*, having requeſted a Gentleman to witneſs the Converſation; when Mr. *Hallam* confirmed the above Determination; and, on being reminded of his Engagements, ſaid, "I did tell Mr. *Ten Eyck* that I would withdraw Mrs. *Hallam*,—*but I did not ſay for how long*:" That he told Mr. *Hallam* that he ſhould conſider his Attempt to force Mrs. *Hallam* on the Stage as a Violation of the Articles; and was anſwered, *he might* THINK *as he pleaſed:* That he told Mr. *Hallam*, that if there was any Diſturbance in the Theatre, on Account of Mrs. *Hallam*, after the Avowal that ſhe had waited upon a Number of Ladies, who had eſpouſed her Quarrel, he ſhould conſider him *(Hallam)* as the Cauſe; and was anſwered, *he might* THINK *as he pleaſed:* That on ſaying he *(Dunlap)* muſt take Meaſures for the Security of his Property, he was anſwered, *he might* DO *as he pleaſed.*

Finding that the Diſſatisfactions of Mr. *Hallam* continued; hearing that he intended to introduce his Wife on the Stage, during the Benefits; and convinced that the Diſſolution of the Company muſt be the Conſequence, to the great Injury of the Performers, as well as of the Proprietors; I determined, with the Concurrence of Mr. *Dunlap*, and the Advice of Gentlemen whom I ſuppoſed Mr. *Hallam*'s Friends, to make him

Propoſals

Propoſals that might prevent Violence, and terminate all Differences to his Satisfaction. Many Modes were premiſed by theſe Friends, and they can vouch I did not, I would not liſten to any, that had not for its End the *future Comfort and Independence of Mr. Hallam.*— With this View the following Letter was ſent to him:

" *March* 17*th*, 1797.

" MR. L. HALLAM,

" Sir,

" YOU having declared to me your Readineſs to ſell " your Theatrical Property, at the ſame Time that you " expreſſed your great Diſſatisfaction of the Arrange- " ment made laſt June, by which I became connected " in Buſineſs with you, I am induced to make, with the " Advice and Approbation of Mr. *Hodgkinſon*, the follow- " ing Propoſals:

" THAT *Lewis Hallam* ſhall ſell his Theatrical Pro- " perty, known by the Name of " Property of the Old " American Company," at ſuch Price, and on ſuch " Terms, as may be hereafter determined; quitting, by " ſuch Sale, all Claim or Title whatſoever on ſaid Com- " pany or Property, to *William Dunlap* and *John Hodg-* " *kinſon*; they giving ſatisfactory Security for the Ful- " filment of the Terms of Sale; and, *moreover*, agree- " ing *to pay to Lewis Hallam One Fourth of the Profits ariſ-* " *ing from the Exhibitions of ſaid Company, in any Part* " *of the United States of America, or any Denomination* " *whatſoever, during the Period of the natural Life of* " *Lewis Hallam, to be paid yearly, on the firſt Day of* " *May:* And this in Conſideration of the Good-Will of " the ſaid *Lewis Hallam* toward ſaid Property or Buſi- " neſs, according to the Uſage of Men retiring and " giving up any fixed Buſineſs to other Men."

" IF theſe Propoſals appear to you ſo far reaſonable " as to ſerve for the Ground-Work of Arrangements, " more ſatisfactory to all the Parties concerned, it will " give *great* Satisfaction to

" W. DUNLAP."

To this Letter Mr. *Dunlap* received no Anſwer, except, that, in a Converſation which took Place between Mr. *Hallam* and me, on (I think) the 20th of March, he ſaid, he did not know that he ſhould *ſell his Property at all*; and, if he accepted a Sinecure, it muſt not only be a *certain, but a large one!* On being aſked how he could expect a *large Certainty?* he replied, the United States were peculiarly ſituated: A war might take Place, and the Theatres be either ſhut up, or, from Diſtreſs, deſerted.

On Saturday, March the 25th, the following Rules were put up in the Green Room, at the Theatre:

REGULATIONS *for the* Old American Company *at the* ensuing BENEFITS.

THE Nights on which Benefit Plays will be performed, to be thrown for in two Claſſes as on the laſt Seaſon.

Any Performer giving Notice after this Date, to the Acting-Manager for the Time being, of his or her Wiſh to get up any new Piece, on his or her Night, will obtain, by ſuch Notice, a prior Right to ſuch new Piece.

No Piece ſhall be performed in any Manner, other than as caſt by the Acting-Manager for the Time being; that Caſt to be obtained previous to advertiſing the Piece.

No Bill to be publiſhed until ſubmitted to the Correction of the Acting-Manager for the Time being, and his Conſent obtained.

No Perſon, not under Engagements as a Performer in the Company, ſhall be permitted to play on any Benefit-Night without the Conſent of the Acting-Manager for the Time being, and one of the other Proprietors.

No Performer can be required to ſtudy more than four Lengths, from Play-Night to Play-Night, and in the ſame Proportion for a longer Time.

JOHN HODGKINSON.
WILLIAM DUNLAP.

On the Monday Evening following, Mr. *Hallam* came into my Dreſſing-Room, and told me he did not chuſe to comply with thoſe Rules. I told him I was ſorry to hear it, and that I ſuppoſed he could not violate them, without violating alſo the Contracts that exiſted between us! He replied, he choſe to violate them, and that he had torn them down, and ſet us at Defiance.

The Wedneſday following, the Tranſaction took Place which I have briefly ſtated as the Motive for this Narrative, in which I truſt it will appear,—1ſt, That, by Articles entered into voluntarily by Mr. *Hallam*, the Purport of which was known to him, and to which he was explicitly adviſed by his Friends, Mrs. *Hallam* had no Right to come on the Stage, or Mr. *Hallam* to demand it:—2d. That Mrs. *Hallam* had not been withdrawn by any Stipulation of mine, at the Time of the preſent Agreement: but by Mr. *Hallam*'s own free Offer and apparent Conviction, that her Conduct had made it improper for her to remain before the Public, and Impoſſible for a reſpectable Stage to be where ſhe was a Performer:—3d, That Mr. *Hallam*, in favouring the Attempt to reproduce Mrs. *Hallam* on the Stage, and in attempting himſelf to introduce her; as well as by tearing down the Regulations of the Acting-Manager; has not only violated his Contracts, but treated the Public with Diſreſpect, and the other Proprietors with Injuſtice.

In Regard to the Proceedings of the 29th and 31ſt of March, I can only obſerve, the Prejudice and Miſrepreſentation that unhappily prevailed, have compelled me to the *moſt painful and irkſome* Mode of juſtifying myſelf—that of expoſing *many* Tranſactions, to public View, which none but the Parties concerned ever ought to have been made acquainted with, or intereſted in; and I truſt my prior Determinations of quitting my Situation, rather than make this Expoſure, will convince every Reader, the Differences ſtated would never have been known thro' me, had not every Means been tried to render my Conduct completely odious to the Parties, who came forward

forward on this Occaſion, that *Calumny* could ſuggeſt. I have been made *accountable* for an Action I was not concerned in, or in my Power ſolely to remedy! as a ſecond Peruſal of our Contracts will *convince*. It has been alſo aſſerted, that Mr. *Hallam* only *applied* to have Mrs. *Hallam* perform at his Benefit: This is not a Fact.—Mr. HALLAM *has never* made *any* Application, but that to Mr. *Dunlap*, in which he ſtated Mrs. HALLAM *ought to be engaged in the Company!* His Son applied on his own Account, but Mr. *Hallam*, ſen. was never mentioned.

I beg Leave alſo further to remark, that the Situation I was placed in was ſo peculiarly trying, none but an Actor, or a Perſon who has made himſelf reſponſible for a *well regulated Entertainment*, can poſſibly feel or judge.

I was received for the firſt Time in my Life, with pointed diſapprobation, before I could even ſpeak. A Perſon who had no Connection with the Stage, whoſe own Faults had deſervedly baniſhed her from it—was called for—was ſecreted—ready to burſt forward—was protected—ſupported by her own Huſband, in direct Violation of his moſt ſolemn Contracts—was allowed to addreſs the Audience—and I not ſuffered to explain or to defend myſelf, when I was the Party, and the only Party injured! If, at ſuch a Criſis, I betrayed any improper Marks of Impatience, I truſt they were ſuch as few Men could refrain from, under ſuch diſtreſſing Circumſtances.

THE Situation of a Theatrical Performer ſeems here to be peculiarly unfortunate: Strong Prejudices are entertained againſt the Profeſſion, and againſt the Drama itſelf, by many. There are alſo thoſe who conſider Actors as Public Slaves, who are to have no Will of their own, but are bound to be the obedient and ſubmiſſive Victims of their Caprice; and ſo wide is the Prepoſſeſſion againſt the Calling, that *many* look upon an Actor as Something different from his fellow Men.

IN Conſequence of theſe Prejudices, that is deemed *Inſolence* in an Actor, which would ſcarcely be called Spirit

Spirit in another Man; and thus a Profeſſion, which, to excel in, requires the Union of many Talents and Accompliſhments, and in particular *Feeling*, the Profeſſor, on ſome Occaſions, is not allowed to *feel at all*. But this is certainly unjuſt: Reſentment ſhould always be meaſured by the Nature of the Injury, not the *Profeſſion*, of the Individual. I felt myſelf aggrieved: I was not allowed to defend myſelf: Few Men are ſo much Maſters of their Temper, as to conduct with perfect Propriety in ſuch Circumſtances! I might fail in this; if I did, it muſt be aſcribed to the peculiar Irritation of the Moment; for I hope I ſcarce need add, I could never entertain an Idea, of treating with indecorum, that Public, from whom I have receiv'd the moſt conſtant and flattering Marks of Approbation—to whoſe Juſtice I now make my laſt Appeal: Whoſe Candor will, I am convinced, acquit me after this hearing, and whoſe

Grateful and ever obedient Servant

I am,

JOHN HODGKINSON.

New-York,
April 6th, 1797.

ERRATA.

Page 5—end of Line 11th, for "offered" read *fought*.
Page 17—laſt Line but one, for "reſervable" read *removable*.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

State of New-York, ss. BY this public Inſtrument, be it known to all whom the ſame doth or may concern, That I, *Charles Bridgen*, a Public Notary, in and for the State of New-York, by Letters Patent under the Great Seal of the ſaid State, duly commiſſioned and ſworn; and in and by the ſaid Letters Patent inveſted "With full Power and Authority to atteſt Deeds, Wills, Teſtaments, Codicils, Agreements, and other Inſtruments in writing, and to adminiſter any Oath or Oaths, to any Perſon or Perſons, do hereby certify, That on the Day of the Date of theſe Preſents, before me perſonally came and appeared, Mr. JOHN HODGKINSON, who being by me duly ſworn, did depoſe and ſay, That all and every of the Facts ſtated by him in his *Narration of his Connection with the Old American Company* are juſt and true, according to the beſt of his Knowledge and Belief.

Whereof an Atteſtation being required, I have granted this under my Notarial Firm and Seal; and the ſaid *John Hodgkinſon* hereunto ſubſcribed his Name.

Done at the City of New-York, in the ſaid State of New-York, the fifteenth Day of April, in the Year One Thouſand Seven Hundred and Ninety-ſeven.

Quod Atteſtor.

CHARLES BRIDGEN,
(Notary Public.

JOHN HODGKINSON.

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